(b) and (c) The Legislative Assembly of Pondicherry has in its various Resolutions urged the Central Government to confer Statehood with a Special Category Status on Pondicherry.The Government of Pondicherry was accordingly in December, 1998 advised to forward a suitable proposal in justification of grant of Special Category Status. This proposal is, however, awaited from the Government of Pondicherry.

National Electricity Policy

*134. SHRIS.S. CHANDRAN:

DR. T. SUBBA RAMI REDDY:

Will the Minister of POWER be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that National Electricity Policy is being prepared;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the States have been consulted in this regard; and

(d) whether the policy is likely to take into account the regional compulsions of States?

THE MINISTER OF POWER (SHRI ANANT GANGARAM GEETE): (a) to (d) Section 3(1) of the Electricity Act, 2003 provides *inter alia* that the Central Government shall prepare the National Electricity Policy in consultation with the State Governments and the Central Electricity Authority (CEA). Views of the State Governments have been solicited on formulation of the National Electricity Policy.

Since the National Electricity Policy is of vital importance for the smooth development of the power sector, the Government of India has constituted a Task Force on Power Sector Investments and Reforms under the Chairmanship of Shri N.K. Singh, Member (Energy), Planning Commission, with the terms of reference *inter alia,* to evolve and recommend a National Electricity Policy.

The State Governments have been requested to give their views on the terms of reference of the Task Force. The Task Force also held a meeting with Energy/Power Secretaries of States on 4th December, 2003. Meetings have also been held with other stakeholders. The Task Force is deliberating on the issues involved.